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HONORABLE OLD AGE.

A

DISCOURSE

OCCASIONED BY THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF

HON. TIMOTHY FARRAR, LL. D.

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THE HOARY HEAD IS A CROWN OF GLORY, IF IT BE FOUND IN THE WAY
OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

TIME imparts a hallowed interest to whatever has long withstood its slow dissolving touch. It invests with sacredness the relic which has survived the wreck of ages, and stamps the seal of a peculiar honor on the virtue it has tested.

With slow and solemn step we walk the cloistered aisle of the deserted temple, once crowded with worshippers, the living men of a nation long since expired. Its mutilated walls, its broken pillars, its crumbling arches, its forsaken altars, its vacant niches, its fallen statues of the mighty dead, its scattered fragments and mouldering ruins, are the authentic history of centuries far remote. We delight to linger in thoughtful silence amid the venerable ruins. They speak to us with solemn pathos of the past. Let not profane lips disturb the silent eloquence of their decaying splendor. The

living spirit of buried centuries is there communing with our own. We hear a voice within saying put thy shoes from off thy feet, for thou art treading upon the consecrated dust of a nation's sepulchre.

With similar emotions we behold the mighty cataract, and listen to the thunder of its roar, for it carries us far back into the solitude of ages, when no voice but its own broke the eternal silence, when no eye but that of the All-seeing beheld its massive torrent and the arching of its rainbows. The same feeling arises when we survey the rocky mountain-head, upon which "eternity hath snowed its years."

This emotion, which scenes like these uniformly inspire, indicates the existence of an original element of the mind, from which it springs. It teaches us that a regard for antiquity is a constituent principle of our nature. The most acute analysis can resolve this principle into nothing more ultimate. The emotion is well defined, and clearly distinguished from those other sentiments of grandeur, and beauty, and honor, with which it is usually connected. It is called into existence alike by the worthless relic and the magnificent ruin, by the rude moss-covered monument and the splendid mausoleum, by the vestiges of man embedded in the mountain-rock and the exhumed temples of

Herculaneum. Upon the relic, which forms a connecting link between remote ages and the present moment, time has cast an enchantment. Take away the other qualities which give interest to external objects, which dignify the character and add lustre to the achievements of men, antiquity alone remaining, they still excite our veneration. It is not superstition which leads us to revere the institutions of our fathers, to venerate whatever time has thrown its mantle upon and honored with its sanctions. In doing this, we but yield obedience to a primary law of our being.

The same principle lies at the foundation of that *honor* which all nations have bestowed upon the man of reverend age. Culture has not engrafted this sentiment upon the original stock of the sensibilities, anticipating as it were the beauty and richness of its fruit. The unwritten law of conventional propriety did not prescribe it, as conducive to the order of society and the happiness of man. Nor was the law of its requisition written by the finger of God merely upon tables of stone. It was engraven in living characters upon the human soul. The value of the principle appears from the fact that it was combined with those elements which constitute man the image of God. Therefore it is, that we feel a strong repugnance to one who is wanting in the quality of respect for old age. Be-

cause this is an essential element of humanity, he seems misshapen, distorted, somewhat monstrous. He is something less than man, and more to be despised than any man, who can treat rudely, or with cold neglect, one who is bending beneath the honors, as well as the infirmities of age. Intelligence, wisdom, justice, and veracity always command the respect of mankind; but when these qualities are confirmed, expanded, and attempered by old age, they demand the higher sentiment of reverence.

The principle we have asserted is, that old age, as such, by a law of our nature, is entitled to a peculiar regard; but when united with righteousness, it constitutes a crown of glory to be revered. The text recognizes this principle. For there is no age in the life of man which religion does not honor and adorn. It throws a radiance upon the open brow of childhood, adds lustre to its bright eye, and beauty to its innocent sportiveness. It checks not the free spirit and elastic energy of youth, but imparts a chastened gaiety, a thoughtful confidence, and paints before its longing eye visions of a better hope. Religion bestows honor upon manhood, giving a proper control to its strong arm, its vigorous intellect, its earnest heart, and determined will. But to the hoary head it is a crown of glory. It wreaths a garland of beauty around the temples of

childhood, encircles the brow of youth with ornaments of grace, covers manhood with a mitre of dignity and honor, but upon the head of venerable age it composes a more excellent adorning, even a crown of glory.

We are led this morning to reflect upon old age, a period of life in which we cannot fail to be interested. The principle we have considered forms the ground of that interest which we cannot but feel in the man who has passed his threescore years and ten, which the decree of Heaven has fixed as the limit of human life. Interesting old age! Behold the "old man covered with a mantle!" He has "come down to us from a former generation." He may be the representative of *three* generations of men.* Then since he became a living soul, three times has earth been repeopled, and as often have its myriads fallen into the bed of dust. He has stood by the tomb of the universe, and while its unnumbered inhabitants have marched in long procession—an awful pomp—three times has he seen a last rank step into the abode of silence. Three armies of living men have the world's population successively become; with sure and rapid strokes death has cut them down, and swept the entire mass into a common grave, while he alone survives unscarred. He stands like the solitary oak

* Note A.

in the midst of the plain ; three forests have been felled around it ; the storms of an hundred years have beaten upon it, and the lightnings of heaven played around it ; yet it stands unscathed, sound at the heart, and the fresh foliage adorning its rigid limbs. The snows of an hundred winters may have whitened the locks of the venerable man. A century may have ploughed furrows in the brow, which it has not mouldered back to dust ; it may have dimmed the lustre of the eye, which it has not availed to seal in death. It may, it must have impaired the outward frame, but it has left a vigorous heart beating within, the life-blood coursing freely through the veins, and the living, conscious spirit in possession of its throne.

Look upon the two extremes of such an age, and mark the space between them. What mighty changes has earth undergone ! Nations have sprung into being ; thrones have crumbled into dust, and the requiem of empires has been sung. Revolution upon revolution has rolled its mighty billows over the face of the earth. Kingdoms have become desolate, and the wilderness populous with far-spreading tribes of men. What marshalling of forces ; what marches and countermarches ; what perpetual antagonism ; what running to and fro among the busy inhabitants of earth ! In the moral world what changes has so long a period wrought ! New insti-

tutions have supplanted old. Society has been cast, and recast in new and still newer forms. Strong minds and stout hearts have rushed into the field of conflict where truth was the prize of victory. Error, assuming new and still newer forms, retreating and still retreating, has been driven from successive hiding-places, and progress, in every department of life, has marked the lapse of an hundred years. Through all that mighty space, the aged man has passed. His ear still open, distinctly heard the solemn tone, when the last hour of that expiring century was struck by the horologe of time.

What a volume would the minute history of such a life compose ; the accumulated thought and action of the mind ; all the yearnings and anguish, the intense and gentler vibrations of the spirit ! He has passed through all the stages of human life. It has no apartment into which he has not entered ; no sanctuary into which he has not gained admittance ; no secluded recess, of darkness or of light, which his eye has not pierced. To him it has no secrets of hope or of fear, of joy or of sorrow, that have not been revealed. He has made thorough trial of it, and knows the very substance out of which the fabric of life is wrought. Its mingled cup of bitter and of sweet he has drank to the very dregs. He has struggled through all its conflicts, encountered all its storms, and now in gentle repose, with

the wisdom of experience, and a nature fitted for the change which awaits it, he stands upon the outmost verge of time, while the waves of eternity are breaking at his feet.

We do well to cherish and cultivate respect for old age. The position it occupies, its relation to the past and the future, to time and to eternity, to man and to God, invest it with interesting claims upon our attention. With profit will we carefully study its time-worn pages, and pluck the fruit of wisdom from the brow of age, and let its gray mantle fall upon the more gay attire of manhood and of youth. Well may we at times yield up our too thoughtless hearts to the full influence of those serious impressions which it is fitted to make. Old age has interest to us because of the possibility that we ourselves may attain it. Who is there, that does not cherish the patriarchal desire, that he may be gathered to his fathers in a good old age, an old man and full of years? that his hoary head may be a crown of glory? Our theme, then, is honorable old age; what such an age is; how it is attained; what are its results. — What constitutes an honorable old age?

The first thing we shall notice as implied in this description is the activity of the bodily powers. The casement of the soul must remain unbroken.* The

* Note B.

outward man must perform all its appropriate functions, and administer to the happiness of the spirit within. Every talent and possession has a value of its own, and is entitled to an appropriate regard. The aged man, "whose eye is not dim nor his natural force abated," we view as an object of curiosity and admiration. We honor one who has been able to keep the complicated machine of the human frame, "fearfully and wonderfully made," in strong and orderly movement so long. Now it is not implied that the decay, or loss of the bodily faculties argues any moral defect, or occasions dishonor. It may be so, or it may not. The cause of the privation, or premature decay will determine this. Infancy may inherit the seeds of disease, which shall speedily germinate, and bring forth the fruit of death, or allow only a protracted life of infirmity and pain. The providence of God may seal up the eye in eternal night, and close the ear forever to the music of speech. Causes beyond human control may distort the frame, disable the limbs, and leave the outward man a useless and miserable wreck. This condition of old age demands compassion; and woe betide the man, who leaves to suffering and want that helplessness, which filial piety, or humane regard, requires him to cherish and protect.

Although physical defect may be the misfortune

of old age, and reflect no dishonor upon it, yet when we see the man of extreme years, with the glow of health upon his cheek, with form erect, with firmness of step and facility of movement, it always indicates the existence of virtues which we do well to honor and emulate. The erect form suggests that he is in other senses *upright*, that he has some of the qualities of a true man. Our life and health, the vigor of our faculties, bodily and mental, are under our control to a far greater extent than we are apt to suppose. Look upon the man of an hundred years, embarrassed with no infirmities except those which time has wrought, stealing upon him by slow and imperceptible approaches, and fighting every inch against a strong tenacity of life; and be assured he has economised, and spent with a frugal hand, that measure of vitality which Heaven has graciously allowed him.

Viewing a life equal in duration to three of the ordinary lives of men, we feel that *temperance* is no cowardly, insignificant virtue. It becomes a gem, adorning a vigorous old age, and sparkling in its crown of glory. I know of an aged man who took care of the body as the tenement of the soul. He kept it in subjection. The principle of conduct was, "this soul shall conquer this body, or quit it." His temperance was no whimsical care of diet, having its commandments of the first and second table,

with a ponderous code of ritual observances, extending to mint, anise and cummin, to be kept with scrupulous ostentation. It was the quiet observance of the principle, to abstain immediately from whatever was found to be injurious. It extended to all things. It was a comprehensive virtue, controlling all the appetites and passions. It secured regularity of habit, freedom from undue exertions and excitements both physical and mental, held the passions in strict subjection, and suffered them not to consume away the life. It enabled him to preserve equanimity, calmness, resignation,

“To husband out life’s taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.”

Becoming a fixed habit, it guarded him almost from the possibility of too great indulgence. It carried him to the centennial year of life, and preserved the body still a not unfit tabernacle for the immortal soul to dwell in. The body was not a burdensome encumbrance, that the soul should desire to cast it off. The usual infirmities of age pressed lightly upon him. Life was not a burden to himself, or the occasion of anxiety and trouble to others. It was still a source of enjoyment. The senses were the inlets of pleasure. The viands of earth were still grateful to the taste; the cheerful light of the sun was still pleasing to the eye; the singing of summer birds still delighted the ear; the flower

was still fragrant, and the untainted breath of early morn invigorating. He walked with secure step over the patient earth. Sleep was sweet to him ; he reclined his head on the pillow of repose, his spirit on the bosom of eternal truth. Thus the current of life was flowing tranquilly, and mingling with the ocean of eternity. Verily virtue, in the present life, has its reward.

With health, and corporeal energy, honorable old age must unite vigor of the intellectual faculties. A sound mind must inhabit the sound body, and the life of one be well mingled with the life of the other. An unmutilated statue from one of the old masters, is a rare specimen of antiquity. A rarer curiosity is that living, antique piece of divine statuary, the sound old man of a by-gone century. But when the outward is the semblance of the inward man, and "the body not only contains but represents the soul," we view it with heightened admiration, and honor one whose vigorous mind embodies the wisdom, and commands the experience of accumulated years. The mind sympathizes with the body. The spirit is weak because the flesh is weak. Mental imbecility often attends physical decay, and awakens the gloomy apprehension that the spiritual nature perishes with the material. The infirmities of age encompass the mind. As the eye grows dim, the light of intelligence is shut out

from the windows of the soul. The sun and the stars of the intellect are darkened, and all the daughters of music brought low. The sprightly and vivid faculties become torpid; the quick perception dull; imagination flutters in the dust; the treacherous memory retains nothing that was committed to its trust. The thinking, reasoning, reflecting being has departed, while the mere rubbish of a man remains, the decrepit body, and the phantom of a mind. The consciousness of a broken, expiring intellect may still survive to inflict exquisite torment on the soul, and cause it to prefer death rather than life. This condition seems to be the usual, though perhaps not the necessary penalty of long life. When, therefore, we see the man of extreme years in the possession of both physical and mental vigor, who has never been made to feel the burden of helplessness and dotage, we not only congratulate him, as a rare favorite of the Divine Providence, but revere him as one whom that Providence has rewarded with especial honor. We ascribe this strength and activity of mind to the constant and right action of all its faculties. The mechanism of the intellect has been kept in nice adjustment; no part has been allowed to rust by disuse, or break and wear out by disorderly movement. Every spring has struck at the right time, every pinion in the right place. There has been no dragging of the wheels, no grat-

ing or straining of the parts, no jars and combats. The vigor of the physical nature has conduced to the vigor of the mental, the health of the body to the health of the soul. Reason has controlled the other faculties, stimulating the sluggish and checking the impulsive. The rust of hatred, the transports of anger, the violences of revenge, the heats and turbulences of passion, have not been allowed to throw all things into confusion and tumult. The intellect has worked hard and constantly, at times with great intenseness, yet the "lubricating oil of an habitual cheerfulness" has given an easy play to the wheels, and kept the machine from wearing out. The use of the mind, without its abuse, has preserved its integrity and lustre. Thought and reflection have been directed to proper objects. The mind having its appropriate nutriment, all its faculties retain their strength and activity.

Honorable old age thus retains a vivid sense of the value of human life. With a keen relish of life, it also becomes instructive to others. The aged man enjoys that noblest of all the gifts of Providence, a clear, unbroken intellect. That painful consciousness of partial annihilation, of which we have spoken, is unknown to him. His soul still exults in the sublime consciousness of its divine powers, and feels all the joyous pulsations of spiritual life. Imagination still delights to wander in freedom

among the beautiful objects of earth; to select, to combine, to create. His memory, even of late events, is unclouded, and surprises by its capacity and accurateness. From its treasury he can bring forth things new and old. From its stereotyped pages, he can read you the entire record of a nation's history, even those minute events for which the antiquary may search in vain. Upon the decisions of his judgment we rely, as the deductions of sound reasoning, of unimpassioned mind, of mature thought, and long experience. His advice is still accepted with undiminished confidence. His words are those which fall from the lips of wisdom,

“As the beaded bubbles that sparkle on the rim of the cup
of immortality.”

Reflection is to him a source of enjoyment and profit. Philosophy comes to his aid, and uses the observations of a long life, and the revelation of eternal truth, to support declining age and mitigate its trials. The sun of his intellect is sinking in the far distant horizon, in full orb'd strength, and unclouded brightness.

Such a man has kept pace with the intellectual progress of the world, and is in sympathy with the age in which he lives. The mind of the old man too often partakes of the inflexibility of his limbs. It is the crystallized thought and feeling of a former age. We admire it as a beautiful relic. It is the

transparent medium through which we see the past. We would therefore deal gently with the prejudices of the aged ; not to do so, betrays stronger prejudice in ourselves. Scrupulously to apply the measuring line of the present age to one who has come down to us from a former, is injustice. Still if the want of intellectual vitality exhibits itself in exalting the past at the expense of the present, in admiring the lustre of the golden age which has expired, and recoiling from the rust of the iron age which is passing, the murmurs and complaints of the old man will hang like a millstone on the neck of his happiness. The constant antagonism of the world chafe his spirits. He ekes out a fretful and comfortless life. It is not thus with the vigorous intellect of honorable old age. This preserves its plastic nature, and is moulded by the age which it may no longer tend to mould. It acknowledges progress in human affairs, rejoices in it, and prefers the present times. Its vitality is not exhausted, nor its happiness marred by murmuring over the degeneracy of the age. With all our love of antiquity, our aged friends who live only in the past and admire nothing out of it, must pardon us if we prefer the old man, who has nothing about him, but superior wisdom and gray hairs, to remind you of the past.

Honorable old age must also possess much of the elasticity and freshness of human life. It must re-

tain a healthy flow of the spirits, a quick play of the sensibilities, a keen sense of enjoyment. These constitute the vitality of the soul. Without them, there is a deadness to the world which is not a virtue. The heart must still expand with its generous sympathies. There are few men of mature years who have not yielded to the morbid tendencies of our struggling life. The sensitive heart recoils from the touch of the cold world, the torch of hope is extinguished by its damps. A cloud of gloom envelops the man of care; disappointment blights a generous enthusiasm, and the burdens of life crush his spirit. He retires within himself, puts on a repulsive habit of reserve, suspicion and distrust. "Confidence is a plant of slow growth in an old man's breast." Yet who of us has not seen some aged man upon whose heart time had left no hard features? His warm affections, ready sympathies, and kindness of manner, still attracted the love and won the confidence of youth. His uniform cheerfulness, playful humor, and lively interest in all about him, made home the scene of hallowed endearment. He conversed on the political news of the day with an accuracy of knowledge and freshness of interest appropriate to the patriot and the citizen. An equability of temper and constant flow of spirits, rendered him at all times a pleasing companion, ready to share and appreciate whatever of

amusement or interest engaged the attention of those with whom he was conversant. Fortunate and happy beyond the common lot of mankind were his declining years of unimpaired vitality. Amiable was his old age of dignity and cheerfulness, free alike from querulous discontent and unbecoming levity. That is a true and manly heart which has come out from the trials of a long life unharmed.

“Behold, a patriarch of years, who leaneth on the staff of religion ;
His heart is fresh, quick to feel, a bursting forth of generosity ;
He, playful in his wisdom is gladdened in his children’s gladness ;

* * * * *

Lofty aspirations, deep affections, holy hopes are his delight.
His abhorrence is to strip from life its charitable garment of ideal.

* * * * *

Passionate thirst for gain never hath burnt within his bosom,
The leaden chains of that dull lust have not bound him prisoner ;
The shrewd world laughed at him for honesty, the vain world
mouthed at him for honor,
The false world hated him for truth, the cold world despised him for
affection ;

Still he kept his treasure the warm and noble heart,
And in that happy wise old man survive the child and lover.
For human life is a Chian wine, flavored unto him who drinketh it,
Delicate fragrance comforting the soul, as needful substance for the
body :

Therefore, see thou art pure and guileless ; so shall thy realities of life
Be sweetened, and tempered, and gladdened by the wholesome spirit
of Romance.”

That is the sublimity of human life, which unites the wisdom and experience of venerable age, with the intellect of manhood, and the heart of youth.

There yet remains to be noticed the most indispensable quality of honorable old age, piety, or an unwavering religious trust. It is called righteousness in the text, and is the last grace of old age, crowning gray hairs with lustre, and adorning the soul for heaven. The wise man expressed what is the universal sentiment of mankind. For however men may sneer at piety as betraying simplicity in youth, and weakness in manhood; however they may despise it as a blemish and a burdensome encumbrance to the man of business, or graciously tolerate it in woman, they admire it as a beauty in old age. They think it an appropriate adorning for the man who has walked far down into the vale of years, and stands on the borders of eternity. Who does not regard piety as a valuable ornament for the man bending beneath the weight of years, leaning on a staff, encompassed with infirmities, or lying upon the bed of sickness and death, soon to appear in the immediate presence of his Omniscient Judge? To him it is indeed the pearl of great price, more valuable than all the other pearls which the waves of a past eternity has dashed upon the shores of time. The robe of righteousness is a becoming attire for the aged man, it gives to him an outward air of composed dignity and peace to the spirit within.

The aged man, whom piety adorns, has yielded

an intelligent assent to the truths of the gospel, and habitually practised its precepts. Fully convinced that these truths will bear the test of philosophical examination, he has cordially embraced them. He has felt their adaptation to the wants of his moral nature; and now, more than ever, he knows that they satisfy a vacuity in his soul which the universe besides cannot fill. In his old age he clings to them, as the only pillar of support to his dependent spirit. The words of Jesus animate his soul; to him they are spirit, they are life.

The natural influence of old age is to confirm and purify all the good principles of earlier life. Hence the aged Christian, who has been long familiar with the fundamental principles of religious truth, exhibits a rare specimen of a pure and philosophical Christianity. The trials of a long life have purged away the dross of his character, and left a purified, refined piety, which sheds a peculiar lustre over the close of life, and a cheerful light upon the tomb. His piety is characterized by strong principle, rather than ardent feeling. It shines with the mild brightness of the setting sun, not with fervors and dazzling brilliancies. Strong and silent emotions, which words cannot express, do indeed stir the deep recesses of his soul; but his piety is as far removed from the blaze of enthusiasm as it is from the coldness of formality. A forgiven peni-

tent, he thinks humbly of himself, and walks softly before God. His humble heart recoils with scrupulous dread from the semblance of ostentatious piety. The love of God is a deep, absorbing principle, prompting holy emotions, and diffusing a calm delight through the soul. He speaks not of raptures, but he knows in whom he has believed. Conscious of approaching death, and not insensible to its mysterious and momentous import, he prays that God may sustain him in the trying hour. Fortified with a devout and rejoicing trust in Christ, he awaits the change, not dismayed by its approach, not impatient of its delay.

“But on he moves to meet his latter end,
 Angels around befriending virtue’s friend;
 Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
 While resignation gently slopes the way;
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
 His heaven commences ere the world be past.”

The steps of his declining life are successive approaches toward heaven.

A repose pervades his soul, which seems at variance, and almost inconsistent with a disciplinary state. It may be compared with the deep blue sky, mirrored from the unruffled surface of the peaceful lake, or with the serenity of outward nature when the storm has subsided, and evening twilight has thrown its soft mantle over the quiet earth. It reaches all the departments of the soul, operating

by a mighty, silent energy, like the unseen agencies which preserve the harmony of the universe. It rebukes the agitations of this jarring, restless world; it calms our unlawful anxieties, our distrustful fears, and turbulent passions. It silences our impatient murmurings and fretful cares. We learn that this stormy life of ours may enjoy a repose, which is an emblem and a foretaste of the heavenly rest. This is the peace of God that passeth understanding.

Honorable old age seems to have collected within itself the virtues, and garnered up the good of human life, while it has abandoned the vices, and escaped many of the evils incident to our nature. Its calm wisdom, its fruitful experience, its subdued passions and chastened sensibilities, its inward repose and purified piety, present human nature in its fairest aspect, in its most honorable robes. Childhood and youth have furnished their bounding, joyous tributaries; manhood, its struggling, turbid current; which declining years have composed and settled, and now there is the tranquil flowing of deep, pure waters, and "the stream of life is nobler as it nears the sea."

A gracious Providence prolongs the life of aged men as a blessing to mankind; that they may bring forth the fruit of righteousness in old age. Their example shines with conspicuous brightness.

The lustre of their gray hairs eloquently enforces lessons of virtue and piety, and wins honor for the truth. Their presence inspires with courage those who are buffeting the storms of life. For they have fought a good fight, they have finished their course, and wear a *visible* crown of glory, emblematic of that crown of life which the righteous Judge shall give them in that day. Their spirits are purified for a better world, their thoughts find a home in the skies, their words are "redolent of sanctity and heaven," their piety is the hallowed incense that perfumes the temple of the Most High. They are living epistles of the truth that godliness hath the promise of the life that now is.

With devout gratitude we acknowledge the divine goodness in allowing one, in the midst of us, to fill up the full measure of an hundred years, and still to linger among us, with vigor of intellect and freshness of heart, to counsel and comfort, to warn and entreat, to cheer and strengthen us.

The God whom the aged man has served in youth, in manhood and declining life, will not cast him off in time of old age, nor forsake him when strength faileth. The promises of God to him shall not fail : "Even to your old age I am he, even to your hoar hairs will I carry you. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. He giveth power to the faint, and to

them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

NOTES.

NOTE A. Page 7.

Judge Farrar was born June 28th, 1747, Old Style. He was 100 years old on Friday, the 9th day of July last. He attended church on the morning of the following Sabbath, when the preceding discourse was delivered.

NOTE B. Page 10.

The following notice of Judge Farrar is from the Boston Daily Advertiser. "He is a native of Lincoln in this State. At the commencement of the Revolutionary war he was a farmer in New Ipswich, N. H. On the 17th of June, 1775, on the report which went by express, that the British were coming out of Boston to Concord, he collected a small company and hurried to the expected scene of conflict; but at Pepperell or Groton they were met by the news that the invaders had retreated to Boston, and they returned.

"The new government of New Hampshire sent Mr. Farrar two commissions, one of Major in the forces to be raised in that State, and the other of Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, urging him however, to accept the latter, there being at that time but three lawyers west of the Merrimac River, two of whom were tories, and the third though a whig, was a timid man and did not dare to accept office under the new government, apprehending that the whole affair would be put down as a rebellion. Men could readily be found to accept military commissions, and it was very important that the new government should secure the confidence of the people by an orderly and stable organization of the civil departments.—These considerations determined Mr. Farrar to accept the office of Judge, though he had not received a legal education. He immediately sent for a copy of Blackstone's Commentaries, just then reprinted in this country by Isaiah Thomas of

Worcester, and read it, to use his own language, "with more avidity than any girl ever read a novel."

"By law he derived his salary only from the fees paid by parties. These were not sufficient to pay his board when on his circuits. He made an arrangement at first for his landlord at Amherst, where he held one of his courts, to take the amount of his fees for his board, but after three terms his landlord declined to continue the arrangement. No lawyer practised in the court during the war, the two tories having either left the country or refusing to recognize the authority of the court, and the whig considering it not quite safe to appear there even under a protest. The court dealt out substantial justice between man and man without much regard to general rules or the establishment of a uniform and consistent system of jurisprudence. By the end of the war Judge Farrar had made himself as good a lawyer as any who were likely to practise in his court.

"In 1791 he was promoted to the Supreme Bench as associate Justice, and in 1802 was appointed Chief Justice, but he declined and procured the appointment and acceptance of Judge Smith who did so much to elevate the Judiciary of New Hampshire to the high standard it has since generally sustained.

"In 1816, at the age of 69, Judge Farrar retired from public life and has lived upon his farm in New Ipswich, till within a few years, when he went to reside with his daughter in Hollis, N. H. His descendants are not numerous, only fifteen being now alive, all but two of whom, with other members of the family were present on the occasion of his centennial anniversary. Judge Farrar formerly of Exeter, N. H., now of Boston, is a son, and Samuel Farrar, Esq. of Andover and Prof. John Farrar of Cambridge, are his nephews. He is a remarkable instance of the preservation of physical and mental vigor to so good an old age; no faculty having failed him except sight, and that but partially, for until about two years since he could read print of common type. To a good constitution, kept good by temperate habits, early rising, a practice still continued, riding on horse-back, and an equanimity as unvarying as the climate of Italy he owes the wholeness of body and mind that is the admiration of all who have seen him."

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